

The Role of Socio-Cultural Competence in Teaching Foreign Languages

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Abstract: In the present study author examines the problem of development of socio-cultural competence in teaching foreign languages. Sociocultural competence is most often understood as: "the ability of a person to communicate with representatives of different age and social groups", conscious expression of a personality manifested in her beliefs, motives, attitudes on a certain behavior, in the formation of personal qualities that contribute to constructive interaction, the presence of a set of skills and behavioral skills in a certain society under appropriate circumstances.

Keywords: socio-cultural competence, ability, skills, factor, behavior.

Introduction. According to I.A. Zimnaya, social competence is key, as it ensures the normal functioning of a person in society and is an integral result of professional education. Social competencies are "natural" or vital competencies of a person; they are formed to implement life strategies and to solve life problems, professional and personal tasks. Sociocultural competence in modern scientific literature is determined by the quality of personality formed in the process of its socialization, and represents a certain level of integrated knowledge, experience of human activity, ensuring the effective performance of specified social roles, and also determines the orientation of the personality and its readiness for effective interaction with the environment. According to S.G. Molchanov, socio-cultural competence is the ability to take responsibility, participate in joint decision-making, in various kinds of socio-cultural design, participate in civilized conflict resolution. In his research, he defines socio-cultural competence as a socially conditioned, generalized qualitative new formation of a personality that contributes to the successful fulfillment of social roles characteristic of effective life in a socio-cultural society, society.[1, p 68] The principal provisions of the theoretical study of development. the ideas of the formation of socio - cultural competence are formulated by him as follows.

- Firstly, socio-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon considered at the junction of a complex of social and psychological sciences. It is part of the social competence of the individual as a whole, the basis of its success.
- Secondly, the purpose of the formation of socio-cultural competence in a broad sense is the development of positive human relations to the surrounding world: Homeland, society, people, living and inanimate nature, material and spiritual values, to oneself, that is, the formation of a life position - one's place in the system of value relations to the world. At the same time, the attitude is a selective category, therefore, in the process of forming socio-cultural competence, a person is put in a situation of choosing political, economic, moral, aesthetic values, in the position of an active subject of the process of educational activity and self-development.
- Thirdly, in order to consider the optimal process of forming socio-cultural competence, it is necessary to study the following factors: the socio-cultural environment, family, collective, informal associations. When studying the socio-cultural environment, its pedagogical potential is important; when studying the family, the moral and psychological climate; when

studying the collective, the psychological climate, social status in the group, openness of the collective; when studying informal associations, social activity, positive social orientation, positive attitude to the traditions that have developed in the collective.[2, p 58]

- Fourth, the most important conditions contributing to the formation of socio-cultural competence in the conditions of an institutional structure are its transformation into an open socio-pedagogical system, a high professional level of teachers, a favorable psychological climate in an educational institution.
- Fifth, when studying the actual socio-cultural competence, it is important to study the significant components: health (indicators of physical development, mastery of health culture); training (the level of development of key competencies, the level of motivation to study, the level of self-organization in various activities, etc.); development (characteristics of life values, openness, sociability, tolerance, self-esteem, realization of internal potential, civic qualities, moral qualities, ideas about life goals, etc.); education (level of development of self-organization and self-discipline, orientation to socially approved norms of behavior, etc.); social stability (level of socio-cultural adaptation and socialization, social mobility and socio-cultural activity and tolerance).

Literature review. According to I.D.Frumin, socio-cultural competence includes several components: socio-cultural awareness, socio-cultural literacy, socio-cultural practice. Sociocultural awareness refers to awareness of certain aspects of life in the socio-cultural space, the availability of information about the object, the required actions, the means of inducing them to master. Speaking about socio-cultural competence, the most commonly used term is socio-cultural literacy. The content of socio-cultural literacy includes many components: the rules of non-conflict communication in the family, formal group; orientation in the socio-cultural environment of residence, socio-cultural life of society; the foundations of a multicultural society. Consequently, when it comes to socio-cultural literacy in behavior, it implies knowledge of ways to reduce risks in a multicultural environment, resilience, the ability to regulate the internal state in certain socio-cultural situations.[3, p 40]

Socio-cultural literacy is an integrating factor, a necessary condition for successful, positive socialization. Socio-cultural practice is an integral element of socio-cultural competence, as it provides personification of the basic rules of life, forms readiness to perform basic actions and social behavior in a multicultural environment. Socio-cultural practice helps a person to understand that the living space is characterized by a mosaic of life scenarios, directions, strategies, conditions, patterns and enriches his experience of building his own movement in this variety of regulating relationships.

Kalinina N.V, linking socio-cultural competence with the upbringing of a free and responsible person who knows how to live together with others in a constantly changing world, identifies such characteristics peculiar to this phenomenon.

- developed social intelligence
- skills of constructive interaction with different people, different ethnicities and age categories
- ability to behave productively in difficult situations
- empathy and empathy for others
- Reflection.

R. Selman refers social intelligence to the element of the psyche that provides a person with orientation in socio-cultural reality. He identifies five main stages in the development of such intelligence:

- the pre-social stage, at which the child does not yet distinguish between internal psychological and external physical principles of behavior; this stage ends when the

thoughts and feelings of other people and their own stand out into an independent reality, become the subject of the child's interest

- the stage of differentiation of the external and internal world, at which the child tries to take the position of another person and offers the partner to "try on" his position
- the stage of understanding, interdependence, mutual conditionality of different goals of individual behavior, thanks to which ideas about human interaction are structured, and they are built into a system
- the stage of social development, which involves awareness of different levels of human intimacy and the ability (or ability) to learn ways to build relationships at different levels of intimacy.

According to the understanding of socio-cultural competence as the ability and readiness of a person for socio-cultural interaction, as well as the logic of its development in five stages, the author adheres to the point of view that systems of human relationships do not arise in people by themselves, therefore insists on the need for special training in the ability to discover and master ways to solve a new class of problems, the analysis of human relations and mastering forms of human interaction.

The components of socio-cultural competence are considered: the level of awareness of a person about the range of possible strategies of behavior in conflict; the ability of a person to implement these strategies in a specific life situation; the degree of her spiritual maturity; the formation of spiritual and moral qualities, the ability to act as a communicative mediator.

Thus, the socio-cultural competence in social inheritance is assigned the function of ensuring the formation of personal meanings, motivational and value spheres, regulation of the processes of a person's understanding of the world, helping him to adapt to new conditions, increasing the competitiveness of the individual.[5, p 209]

A special interest in the study of the phenomenon of social (socio-cultural) intelligence has arisen in our country in the last two decades. The identification of social intelligence as a special field of psychological research is due to the relative autonomy and complexity of this phenomenon, which determines the success of social cognition, social interaction and socio-cultural adaptation.

In the works devoted to socio-cultural competence and social intelligence, V.N. Kunitsyna clarified the separation of these concepts.

In her opinion, social intelligence acts as a means of cognition of socio-cultural reality, and socio-cultural competence – as a product of this cognition.

Social intelligence and socio-cultural competence are united by the fact that they:

- provide an opportunity to adapt adequately to the conditions of social change
- ensure the correct assessment of the situation, the adoption and execution of error-free decisions
- Have quantitative characteristics, levels that can be measured.

The difference consists in functions, mechanisms, content characteristics and ways of improvement; the latter is expressed in the fact that the improvement of socio-cultural competence goes through learning, expansion of knowledge and experience. Social intelligence develops due to the formation of socially desirable personal and communicative properties, improvement of mechanisms of mental regulation, self-control and self-regulation.

From all of the above, the following conclusion can be drawn: the fewer evaluative stereotypes a person has in his mind, the higher and more harmonious his social intelligence, the more accurate and differentiated perception and understanding, adequate perception of himself and other people. At the same time, the more social stereotypes (for the development and application

of which socio-cultural competence is responsible) a person uses and stores in his mind, the easier it is for him to fit into diverse and typical social situations.

Method. This study was carried out using a qualitative research design in which the purpose was to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How well fictional literature, can help to enhance students' socio-cultural competence?
- 2) What kind of challenges faced by students' in implementing and understanding textual materials from fictional literature in the lesson?
- 3) What are the beneficial sides of using textual materials from fictional literature in lessons to prosper students' socio-cultural competence?

Two principal methods used in the research are as follows: the method of analysis and the method of generalization. Analysis allowed us to point out crucial historical events touched upon in the fictions by E. Hemingway, Ch. Dickens, S. Mougham, S. Fitzgerald, O. Henry and important in the context of developing students' socio-cultural competence. Generalization method resulted in designing the set of activities based on all selected chapters aimed at developing students' socio-cultural competence. During this study I will analyze each teacher's classroom library. I will be recording the total number of books that their library holds, the number of cultural books, and the number of socio-culturally relevant books. I have defined cultural books to be books that meet one of the seven components listed in the section entitled *what is socio-culturally relevant literature*: accurate information, authentic language used, common, universal experiences, realistic, relatable storyline, endings hold true to the culture, and conscious ideology not assimilation. To be counted in the Socio-culturally relevant literature category a book has to include one component from each of the three subsections: authentic, realistic, and socio-culturally conscious ideology.

I will work with teachers on an individual basis to discover what they know about cultural relevance and how willing they are to change their classroom libraries to make them more socio-culturally relevant. This will be done through a pre-interview, a lesson about my socio-culturally relevant research, an observation, and a post-interview. The pre-interview will tell me if the teachers make a distinction between cultural, and socio-culturally relevant. I also hope to discover what books they use as part of their instruction, if they use some or all of the texts in their classroom libraries, or if they have other books that they use for instruction that are kept elsewhere. The lesson about my impact of socio-culturally relevant fictional literature to student's competence will include: some background information about the research, them receiving a checklist to help them to identify socio-culturally relevant fictional literature, and teaching them how to use it.

Discussion. Following the lesson, I will give them a pre-selected set of texts that may be cultural, socio-culturally relevant or neither according to the research and requirements I have set up. While they sift through the texts I will be watching them closely to fill out an observation form about how they do. Lastly, the post interview will tell me how the teachers now define cultural relevance, and what makes a book socio-culturally relevant. It will also serve as an exit survey to see what they have learned, how they are planning to use this new knowledge in their classroom and while picking out new literature, and how interested they are in making their classroom libraries more socio-culturally relevant.

A. Research site and participants.

This study was conducted at Bukhara state university, Karshi state university and Termez state university, for philological faculty students. 540 students and 70 teachers were participated in the research. Research were held only for lessons of "History of literature of the country whose language is studied".

B. Procedure.

Educators need to be made aware of the importance of sharing socio-culturally relevant fictional literature and what being socio-culturally relevant means. So, all learning activities were related to the topic. I have implemented all the socio-culturally relevant materials in the lesson. In terms of content, I have collaborated with the participants about choosing socio-culturally relevant literature and authors. At the beginning level of my research, I have showed the texts to the participants and asked them if they have no difficulties in the understanding and discussing it. Then, came next level, interpreting their texts. From every texts they had to find socio-cultural factors. They were given a text from non- adopted literature. The processes of teaching and learning were undertaken in accordance with given materials. Educators also need to be taught how to distinguish between texts that may have some cultural aspects, and that can be deemed socio-culturally relevant. I discovered from my research that teachers may be aware of multicultural knowledge, but they do not necessarily understand the importance of cultural relevance. Educators need to make literature socio-culturally relevant available to the students they have in their classrooms. Empowering students, by providing them with literature they can see themselves in, is a critical component of reading “Repeated exposure to engaging literature in which children find themselves establishing personal connections with characters, the likelihood is great that reading will become an appealing activity”. Students need to know how to critically analyze characters and texts, to understand the power of perspective. Involving students in the process can also empower them, by asking them to accumulate their own selection. Criteria for socio-culturally relevant literature, and let them share their opinions on what educators buy and/or place in their classroom libraries. I found this particularly important because the literature I found in the participant’s libraries was lacking socio-culturally relevant components, and when teachers are unaware of socio-culturally relevant literature it proves difficult to find literature relevant to all the students and cultures represented in their classrooms. I have more thoughts and questions after conducting this action research. I would like to investigate with others teachers to repeat the study and see what they have in their libraries, and whether the “multicultural books” they have been socio-culturally relevant. I would like to create criteria for myself and for my students to help us choose what they read, and what is placed in our classroom library. Lastly, thinking about the texts I chose from the articles I read for the teachers to analyze, I would like to compile a list of socio-culturally relevant texts that can be used in the classroom throughout the year.

C. Techniques for collecting and analyzing data.

On-line questionnaires and interview were used as the means for data collection. Questionnaire was held to know pupils’ attitude and interests towards to the beneficial sides of authentic materials to develop their communicative competence and what challenges they come across in the classroom that was used various types of authentic materials. Then, interview questions which were developed by considering the approach to hear the voices of the participants concerning their experience in the classroom where authentic materials effectively used. 12 participants were carefully selected from 25 pupils involved in this study. The selection was based on the results of the questionnaire. Participants showed the actions (e.g. showing enthusiasm, interest, lack of attention, etc) were considered to be recruited for the interview. Two teachers were also interviewed. All the participants were notified that their participation was voluntary. To analyze the interview data, the transcripts were carefully checked and observed to search for common topics.

Results and recommendation. The first part done in this study is investigating the implementation of different types of authentic materials in the English classes, more specifically, a newspaper article, famous people’s images, video, posters on different contexts and realia. This study also applied interview to collect the data. The interview data were achieved from 12 participants who were chosen based on their questionnaire. They were opted for giving detail information about the topic and they presented their various understanding and experiences about the authentic materials. The findings from the questionnaire and interview are explained in



the following subheadings.

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